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FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

BY ELISABETH ROBINSON SCOVIL

Everything concerning the life of Florence Nightingale is of intense interest to nurses. Looking up to her as they do and seeing in her not only one of the first members of their profession but certainly up to this time the greatest one, they wish to learn all that can be told about her.

Perhaps it is not generally known that her father's name was originally William Edward Shore. Upon the death of his great uncle, Squire Nightingale, he succeeded to his estate in Derbyshire, Lea Hall, and took his family name. The new Squire Nightingale was a traveler and knew Europe well. He had only two daughters, both born in Italy. The elder, who afterwards became Lady Verney, was named Parthenope, the old name for Naples. The younger, who was born on the 12th of May, 1820, at the Villa Columbaia, just outside Florence, was named Florence after the City of Flowers, her birthplace. She had another home in England besides Lea Hurst, the new house which her father had built on the estate to replace Lea Hall and into which the family moved when she was six years old. The other home was Embley Park, in Hampshire, where the winter and spring were always spent. It was in the little churchyard of West-Wellow, in Hampshire, that she was finally laid to rest, close to the father and mother from whom she had been so long separated.

We are all familiar with the story of her choice of a life work, which led her to Pastor Fliedner and the training at Kaiserswerth.

In 1854 war broke out between England and France, and Russia, the allies fighting to prevent Russia from oppressing Turkey. War was declared on the 28th of March; on the 20th of September the battle of Alma was fought. This was in the Crimea, at the extreme south of Russia. The wounded had to be sent three hundred miles back, across the Black Sea, to the great hospital at Scutari. It was situated on a hill, overlooking the Golden Gate, as the opening from the Black Sea into the Sea of Marmora is called, directly opposite Constantinople. Imagine the misery of that journey! This huge barrack hospital had been lent to the English by the Turks for the reception of their sick and wounded. They were carried from the battlefield with wounds not dressed, broken arms and legs unset, to Balaclava and put on board ship for the three hundred mile voyage. There were no dressings, no medicines, no comforts, often no food which desperately sick and wounded men could touch. When they reached the hospital at Scutari it was only to find that all they had endured hitherto was but the beginning of what they

had to suffer. So overcrowded was the place that the wounded were laid down anywhere, in the passages and on the floor of the wards. The too few and terribly dirty beds were full.

The Barrack Hospital, as it was called, was built round a great square, each of the corridors being nearly a quarter of a mile long. The number of men lying in double rows along them can be imagined. There were other hospitals as well as this main one, all equally full. Every hour brought in more patients. The surgeons and orderlies were overwhelmed with the work and could do no more than a fraction of it. There was no time to clean the rooms, nor was it possible to do so, with men lying on every square inch of floor space. There was not food enough, what there was, was badly cooked or not cooked at all. No light but candles stuck in empty wine or beer bottles. There were no changes of clothes for the patients, who lay there in the blood stained uniforms which had not been taken off for days, waiting, waiting for some one to come and care for them. Yet of such stuff is our Anglo-Saxon race made that they took it all in silence, as was said at the time, "with obstinate pride." When a man died his comrades would say enviously, "There's one poor fellow out of pain anyway."

It was at this time that William Howard Russell, "the first and greatest of war correspondents," as he is called on his monument in the crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, wrote his memorable letter to *The Times*. He said, "Are there no devoted women amongst us, able and willing to go forth and minister to the sick and suffering soldiers of the East in the hospitals at Scutari? Are none of the daughters of England, at this extreme hour of need, ready for such a work of mercy? France has sent forth her sisters of mercy unsparingly and they are even now by the bedsides of the wounded and dying, giving what woman's hand alone can give of comfort and relief. Must we fall so far below the French in self-sacrifice and devotion?" No. There were those who would go. Among the thousands who read the appeal of the Crimean war correspondent was the daughter of the country squire who had trained herself by years of labor to be a hospital nurse. English fathers and mothers were giving their sons to serve their country. Would her father and mother give a daughter? she asked. They would. On Sunday, the 15th of October, she wrote and posted a letter to the War Office, offering to go out and nurse the wounded soldiers.

Meanwhile names of those eager to help were pouring in to the War Office. The difficulty was whom to choose. Who was to distinguish between the fit and the unfit of the volunteers? Above all who was to command this band of brave and devoted women? On that same Sunday Mr. Sidney Herbert, who was at the head of the War Department,

wrote a letter to the "one woman in all England" whom he and those who were with him felt would be the woman to take up this mighty work. He said, "My question simply is, would you listen to the request to go out and supervise the whole thing?" The two letters crossed. We know Florence Nightingale's answer.

Exactly a week later, on Trafalgar Day, October 21, Miss Nightingale and the first 38 nurses chosen by her left a London station. So quiet was their departure that very few persons knew of it. When they reached Boulogne the news had spread that "the sisters" were coming. French and English were fighting side by side in the Crimea, therefore French women claimed as their right the privilege of looking after "les soeurs." When the steamer came in the quay was lined with the fisherwomen in their white caps and short skirts. They took possession of the nurses' boxes and bags, and warning off the porters carried them to the train. It was the same all the way to Marseilles, where they embarked. No porter would take a tip, no hotel keeper would send in a bill. The Peninsular and Oriental steamer, *Vectis*, was waiting, and without delay they sailed for Scutari.

The day after the nurses left Paris the battle of Balaclava was fought, when the famous charge of the Light Brigade was made. The day after they arrived at Scutari came the battle of Inkerman, both adding to the list of wounded and increasing the fearful congestion in the hospitals. Cholera broke out, as is not to be wondered at when the unsanitary conditions that prevailed are considered. "Invalids were set to take care of invalids and the dying nursed the dying," as one historian says.

In the midst of this confusion Florence Nightingale arrived with her band of nurses. In ten days she had brought order out of chaos. When the wounded from Inkerman began to arrive in hundreds she asked for food, brandy, shirts and sheets. When she was told that none of these things could be had without a written order signed by some one in authority who was absent at the moment, she ordered the cases and bales to be opened and the necessaries distributed. She had brought with her at her own expense immense stores of all that she knew would be needed at once. *The Times* opened a subscription list for funds to send more and on the first day over \$10,000 was subscribed. Every woman in England, from Queen Victoria and the princesses, her daughters, knitted socks, made shirts, etc. On Christmas Day, when the Queen's health was drunk in the Barrack Hospital, not a man throughout the huge building, it was said, but had such comforts as the willing hands and tender hearts of women could devise.

A relative of my mother spent long weeks as an officer on duty in the trenches before Sebastopol and there is still in the family a recipe for

Sebastopol pudding, said to be the one from which the puddings were made that were sent out from England to the soldiers for their Christmas dinner.

The next February, M. Soyer, the French chef of the Reform Club, in London, offered to go out at his own expense, without remuneration, and help Miss Nightingale in the kitchen arrangements. He proved invaluable, not only giving advice, but actually doing cooking, himself. He always spoke of her ever after as "the ministering angel."

In May, 1855, she left Scutari for the first time, the faithful M. Soyer going with her, to inspect the hospitals that had been established in different parts of the Crimea. Here she became very ill and was carried to a hut on the heights of Balaclava, where she could have purer air. One pouring wet day two horsemen galloped up to the hut and dismounted. One held the horses while the other knocked for admittance and in a loud voice asked for Miss Nightingale. The nurse in charge rushed out and told him not to talk so loud, that no one could see the invalid. "My name is Raglan," said the officer, "she knows me very well. I have come a long way to see her." It was the commander-in-chief of the British army. Miss Nightingale begged him not to risk seeing her as he might catch the fever. Whereupon he promptly walked in, took a stool and sat down at the foot of the bed, saying he must have a few words with the lady-in-chief, as she was called throughout the army. They only met once again. Lord Raglan died just after the British troops had been repulsed before Sebastopol, when they were besieging the Russians.

As soon as she could be moved, Miss Nightingale returned to Scutari. Never was warmer welcome than that given her and never a greater contrast than between the hospital she returned to and that which she first entered on that dismal 4th of November the year before. Truly did Dean Stanley, the Dean of Westminster Abbey, say of her that she was a woman of commanding genius.

Sebastopol was taken on the 8th of September, 1855, and the treaty of peace signed on the 30th of March, 1856. Not until the last patient had left the Hospital did Florence Nightingale return to England. She sailed in July. The last thing she did was to have a white marble cross erected on the heights of Balaclava to the memory of the soldiers and nurses who had died during the war. The British government offered to send a man-of-war to bring her home and England was planning a great reception. As quietly as she went she came back again and before the public was aware of it she was in her Derbyshire home with her parents and sister. Then presents, addresses, welcomes, were showered upon her. Queen Victoria summoned her to visit her at Balmoral, her home

in the Highlands. A large fund was raised by popular subscription and presented to her. With it she founded The Nightingale School for Nurses at St. Thomas Hospital, London. The Queen gave her a beautiful ornament, designed by the Prince consort, and the Sultan of Turkey sent her a magnificent diamond bracelet. These with the Order of Merit, presented to her by King Edward VII, and eight other Orders, may be seen in a case in the museum of the Royal United Service Institution, in Whitehall. Here, too, near the bust of Lord Nelson, is a bust of this greatest of nurses, subscribed for and given by the workmen of England.

She gave her health and strength to serve her country, for though she lived to return home she was ever after an invalid. Fifty-four years of ill health, many of them spent in bed, seemed a great price to pay. Did she consider it too great? Not if we may judge from her words and deeds. In a letter written in 1861, she says, "My life is spent between four walls, only varied to other four walls once a year. I believe there is no prospect but of my health becoming ever worse and worse until the hour of my release. But I have never ceased for one waking hour, since my return to England five years ago, laboring for the welfare of the army at home as I did abroad."

The hour of her release was then nearly fifty years distant, yet in all that time she continued to work ceaselessly. Her sick room, it was said, might have passed for an annex of the War Office, so filled was it with schemes for army hospital reform and communications from all sorts and conditions of soldiers. Whoever in the army had a grievance wrote to her, she was still the lady-in-chief. Being known to be wealthy, as well as generous, she was overwhelmed with begging letters. Kinglake, the great historian of the Crimea, exclaims, "I say it with delight, *there had never come one from a soldier.*"

As she lived she died, in her ninety-first year. Her friends refused for her the offered resting place in Westminster Abbey and she sleeps under the sod of her own county.

On Saturday, August 20, 1910, a week after her death, a memorial service was held in St. Paul's Cathedral, which seemed filled with a solid mass of nurses and soldiers. On the south side of the dome were fifty Chelsea pensioners from Chelsea Hospital, the home of disabled soldiers, all wearing the Crimean medals. In front of the choir steps was the band of the Coldstream Guards. When the long roll of the muffled drums before the Dead March was heard it seemed to those present like an echo from the far-off past, a memory of the Crimean cannon. She "knew their voices of old." Representatives of every regiment which had fought in the war were there to do her honor. At the same moment her coffin, carried by nine men chosen from the battalions of the Guards

which had been in the Crimea, three from the Grenadier, three from the Coldstream and three from the Scots, was borne into the little country churchyard of West-Wellow. Guarded by her soldiers and surrounded by her friends the lady-in-chief was laid to rest, as quietly and unostentatiously as she had lived.

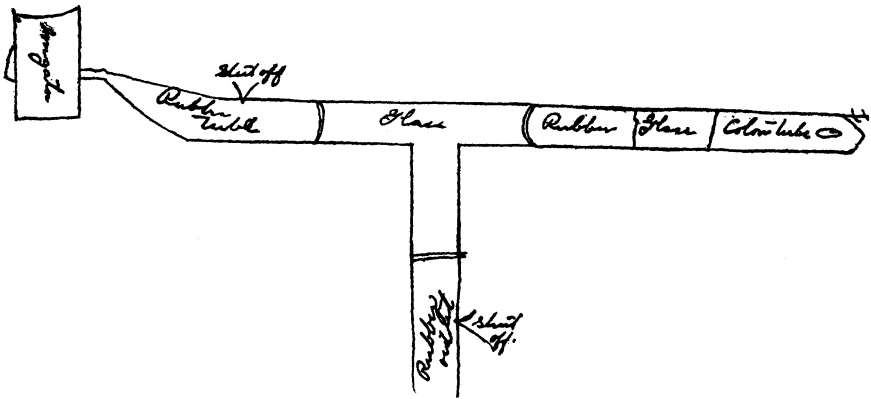
Being dead she yet speaks to us, holding up that high ideal of self-devotion and self-sacrifice without which a nurse's life can only be a daily round of ignoble toil. Duty is ours to do, as it was hers, and her example will help us to do it more faithfully if we will follow it.

IMPROVED METHOD OF COLON IRRIGATION

BY BERTHA M. VOSWINKEL, R.N.

Graduate of the Episcopal Hospital, Philadelphia

Nurses when required to give colon irrigations rather dread the proceeding. In some hospitals, where two tubes are inserted, there is always more or less discomfort to the patient. And the other process of giving the irrigation by means of the colon tube and a funnel is a lengthy proceeding, although attended by less discomfort to the patient.



Dr. George Roe Lockwood, of New York, has devised a very simple apparatus by which the colon can be thoroughly flushed with practically no discomfort. It consists of a glass T, one arm of which is connected with the tube from the irrigator. The other arm is attached, by means of a short rubber and glass connection, to the colon tube. To the lower arm of the T an outlet of about two feet of rubber tubing is attached; the free end being placed in a bucket or other receptacle.

There is a "shut off" on the tube coming from the irrigator, and a